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ABSTRACT

This issue on gender and the media contains the following (1) "Home, Home on the Remote"; (2) "Dads Through the Decades" (Mark Crispin Miller); (3) "The New Man: That's Entertainment!" (John Lehrer); (4) "Singing Men's Songs" (Kerry Skorlich); (5) "Media Myths and Men's Work" (Ian Harris); (6) "Why Are There No Asian Male Anchors?" (Ben Fong-Torres); (7) "Male Bashing" (Fred Hayward); and (8) "'Stale Roles/Tight Buns'" (Tom Nakayama). (EH)

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Fall 1989

Number 48

MEN, MYTH AND MEDIA

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TV Dads Through the Decades p. 6

The Lies That Bind p. 21

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ELIZABETH THOMAN

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

FIRST OF A TWO-PART SERIES ON GENDER AND THE MEDIA

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Media&Values

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Media&Values is the cornerstone of a pioneering media awareness education movement to promote better understanding of how today's mass media environment influences individual and social values — personal attitudes and social behaviors as well as cultural, economic and political worldviews. *Media&Values* believes that a concern for values in today's media age is not so much knowing all the answers as asking the right questions. Working in collaboration with educational leaders, youth and family-serving organizations, religious denominations and academic researchers, the Center's goal is to empower families and individuals to learn what questions to ask and thus become more selective and knowledgeable consumers of today's mass media products.

In addition to publishing *Media&Values*, the Center sponsors workshops, organizes forums, conferences and seminars, creates educational resource materials for local use and maintains an information and resource center on the media issues of our time. Funding for the Center comes from subscriptions and memberships along with individual donations, foundation grants and organizational co-sponsorships.

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First of a two-part series on gender and the media

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HOME, HOME ON THE

Is male fascination with TV technology domination of family entertainment?

On a recent segment of a popular television newsmagazine program, the television anchors joked about a new cultural phenomenon: men's almost anatomical affinity for television remote-control devices. The segment ended when the female member of the team noted that in view of male tendencies not only to control situations but also to maintain some distance from their activities, their liking for zapping the channel flicker from afar made perfect sense.

Referring to the new world of communications media as "a masculine domain," West Germans Jan-Uwe Rogge and Klaus Jensen are one of several research teams around the world beginning to examine how family members interact with each other in the presence of sophisticated home entertainment media: remote-control-driven televisions, VCRs, video games, stereo systems and even computers. The findings are providing significant new insight into the influence of

> ***"Dad keeps both of the automatic controls — one on each side of his chair."***
>
> **World Families Watch Television**

today's mass media on relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, male and female siblings.

Indeed, some families seem to be experiencing a thorough "rearrangement" of the moral economy of the household, particularly in regard to traditional child-rearing practices, family communication rituals and, especially, power relationships between the spouses.

These cultural trends are being watched and documented by researchers such as

REMOTE

creating male

David Morley and his colleagues Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsch at the Centre for Research into Innovation, Culture and Technology at Brunel University near London. Although still a new area of investigation, their initial studies, along with those from six other countries, make fascinating reading in *World Families Watch Television*, a recent book edited by James Lull of San Jose State University. (To order, see page 23.) The following vignettes reveal some of the more interesting findings from the book and related research.

•

"We discuss what we all want to watch, and the biggest wins. That's me, I'm the biggest."

Masculine power is evident in a number of the families as the ultimate determinant on occasions of conflict over viewing choices. It is even more apparent in the case of those families that have a remote-control device. None of the women in any of the families used the remote regularly, and a number of them complain that their husbands use the device obsessively, channel-flicking across programs even when the wives are trying to watch something else.

Characteristically, the remote-control device is the symbolic possession of the father (or the son, in the father's absence) that sits "on the arm of Daddy's chair" and is used almost exclusively by him. It is a highly visible symbol of condensed power relations, the descendant of the medieval mace, perhaps?

Interestingly, the main exceptions to this overall pattern are those families in which the husband is unemployed while his wife is working. In these cases it is slightly more common for the man to be expected to let other family members watch what they want to when it is broadcast while he videotapes what he would like to see in order to watch later at night or the following day. His timetable of commitments is more flexible than those of the working members of the family.

Wife: "Flick, flick, flick — when they're in the middle of a sentence on the telly. He's always flicking it over."

Husband: "The remote control? Oh, yes, I use it all the time."

World Families Watch Television

Thus, the man's position of power is based not simply on the biological fact of being male but rather on a social definition of masculinity of which employment (that is, a "breadwinner") is a necessary and constituent part. When the condition is not met, the pattern of power relations within the home changes noticeably.

It is noteworthy that a number of the men interviewed show some anxiety to demonstrate that they are 'the boss' of the household, and their very anxiety around this issue perhaps betokens a sense that their domestic power is ultimately a fragile and somewhat insecure thing, rather than a fixed and secure 'possession' which they can always guarantee to hold with confidence. Hence perhaps the symbolic importance to them of physical possession of the channel-control device.

A man accustomed to this dominance feels he has the power to change channels whenever he wants—even in the midst of his wife's favorite show or events the children are watching. "The television's flickering all the time while he's flickering the timer," noted one wife.

Interestingly, male dominance of viewing choices is almost entirely absent in Venezuela, where researcher Leoncio Barrios found that the traditional matrilineal Venezuelan family structure reversed the pattern found elsewhere. Thus, in Venezuelan families it is often the grandmother of the household who walks around with the remote tucked in her apron, to the distress of her grandchildren.

•

"I knit because I think I am wasting my time just watching. I know what's going on, so I only have to glance up. I always knit when I watch."

One major finding is the consistency with which both men and women describe their viewing activitiy. Essentially, men state a clear preference for viewing attentively, in silence, without interruption "in order not to miss anything."

Moreover, they display puzzlement at the way their wives and daughters watch television. For the women, viewing is fundamentally a social activity, involving ongoing conversation and usually the performance of at least one other domestic activity (ironing, etc.) at the same time. Indeed, many women feel that to just watch television without doing anything else would be an indefensible waste of time, given their sense of domestic obligations. The women note that their husbands are always "on them" to shut up, and the men can't really understand how their wives can follow the programs if

they are doing something else.

A number of women explain that their greatest pleasure is to be able to watch a "nice weepie" or their favorite soap opera when the rest of the family isn't there. Only then do they feel free enough of their domestic responsibilities to "indulge" themselves in the same kind of attentive viewing in which their husbands routinely engage.

What is at issue here is the guilt that these women feel about their own pleasures. They are, on the whole, prepared to concede that the dramas and soap operas they like are "silly" or inconsequential, yet they accept the masculine worldview that defines their preferences as having low status. Having accepted these terms, they then find it hard to argue for their preferences because, by definition, what their husbands want to watch is more prestigious.

They then deal with this by watching their programs, when possible, on their own or only with their women friends and fit their viewing arrangements into the crevices of their domestice timetables.

Lull observes that home is the site of leisure for employed men, a place they can relax when the work day is done. For women, however, home is a site of work; they can never fully relax and enjoy viewing in the same way that men can.

•

"I can't use the video. I tried to tape something for him and I done it wrong. He went barmy. I always ask him to do it for me because I can't. I always do it wrong."

Although women routinely operate extremely sophisticated pieces of domestic technology (such as microwave ovens, washing and sewing machines), British researcher Ann Gray has discovered that many women feel alienated from operating the family's VCR.

"The reasons for this are manifold and have been brought about by positioning within the family, the educational system and the institutionalized sexism which divides appropriate activities and knowledge in terms of gender. But there is also, as I discovered, something I call 'calculated ignorance:' 'If I learnt how to do the video, it would become my job just like everything else,' said one woman."

In a novel experiment reported in *Boxed In: Women and Television*, (See resources, page 23) Gray asked women to "color code" pieces of home technology. "When a new piece of technology is purchased," observes Gray, "it is often already inscribed with gender expectations. By asking the women to imagine pieces of equipment colored either pink or blue, I've been able to throw the gender of domestic technology into high relief."

"Who does what with a technology for what purposes is, at least in part, a cause and effect of gender. Men are more likely than women to be owners and operators of cameras that take pictures of women. Women have their pictures taken and may be more likely to have responsibility for maintaining family ties and history through photographs. Men speak, write and publish more in the public world of commerce, politics and ideas. . . but women write the family letters and make the family telephone calls."

Lana Rakow
"Gendered Technology, Gendered Practice,"
***Critical Studies in Mass Communication* #5 (Sage)**

Within this visual classification, irons become pink and electric drills blue; the washing machine is pink on the outside, but the motor is almost always blue.

Gray noticed, however, that the color coding of the VCR was more complex. "The record, rewind and play modes are usually lilac (a genderless color), but the timer switch is nearly always blue, with women having to depend on their male partners or their children to set the timer for them." And, corroborating the research of Morley, Lull and others, Gray found that "the blueness of the timer is exceeded only by the deep indigo of the remote control switch, which in all cases is held by the man."

Interestingly, the major exception to this by-and-large universally accepted allocation of technological power involves the soap opera. Across cultures, women are fiercely attached to the "telenovela," the "Oshin," the "daily weepie"—so much so that when their viewing of these extended romantic sagas is at stake, they will often rise to the occasion and learn how to operate the VCR.

In one Kentucky family observed by Thomas Lindlof, Milton Schatzer and Daniel Wilkinson at the University of Kentucky, the wife, Patty D., "had the most interest in purchasing the new family VCR so that she could time-shift her favorite soap operas." Then, reversing the traditional role, she "remained in control of almost all the taping events." Nonetheless, the researchers found that in the other families, "most of the female family members generally disavowed interest in operating the VCR and regarded it as a technical matter," and that even Patty D. was "wary" of the pre-program function "until the exigency of archiving material for her children motivated her to learn to program the machine."

Lull adds another insight: males are usually more involved in making the VCR purchase decision and, as a consequence, are initially more competent in its features and functions when the machine arrives in the household. Possessing more initial expertise, and perhaps having more time to devote to taping and other more advanced applications, the male dominates in using the VCR.

•

"A husband and wife were talking with the TV set turned on. When he wanted to ignore his wife's claims he started to switch the channels rapidly, commenting about what was shown on each."

"Historically, men's and women's relationship to technology has come out of their relationship to each other," says Karen Altman, professor of communications at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and an authority in the field of gender and technology.

In an exclusive interview with *Media&Values*, Altman explained that traditionally, men have acquired power through language and information, while women's power has been associated with passive seduction and the guardianship of the home. This demarcation line extends to the advertising images that have be-

come embedded, through the centuries, in the cultural subconscious.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, advertisements for TV sets approached men and women according to these ideological models. "The television was clearly a sign of masculinity when men were associated with it," explains Altman. "In many early TV ads, men are shown watching television with pipes in hand and their trophies on the set, signifying the television as a place of potency and virility.

"When women were pictured with TVs, however, the family and home took prominence. The woman was in the background, clearing the table, watching from a distance. Or she was in evening wear, lounging on the television or standing seductively beside it, associating the set with the feminine qualities of passivity, receptivity and consumption. The woman was used in the ad as a display object, like the product itself.

"At the same time, a man would often be portrayed in suit and tie, delivering a testimonial on the quality of the TV. In other words, men controlled language. And the ads ascribed to television the qualities associated with masculinity: control, activity and mastery."

Changing men's and women's relationship to technology will not be easy, says Altman. "Although there's nothing natural about the assumption that men automatically know and care about technical details and women don't, it's reinforced by public messages that we've gotten for years."

"Fathers were observed, and named by other family members to be, the persons who most often control the selection of television programs in the U.S."

James Lull, *World Families Watch Television*

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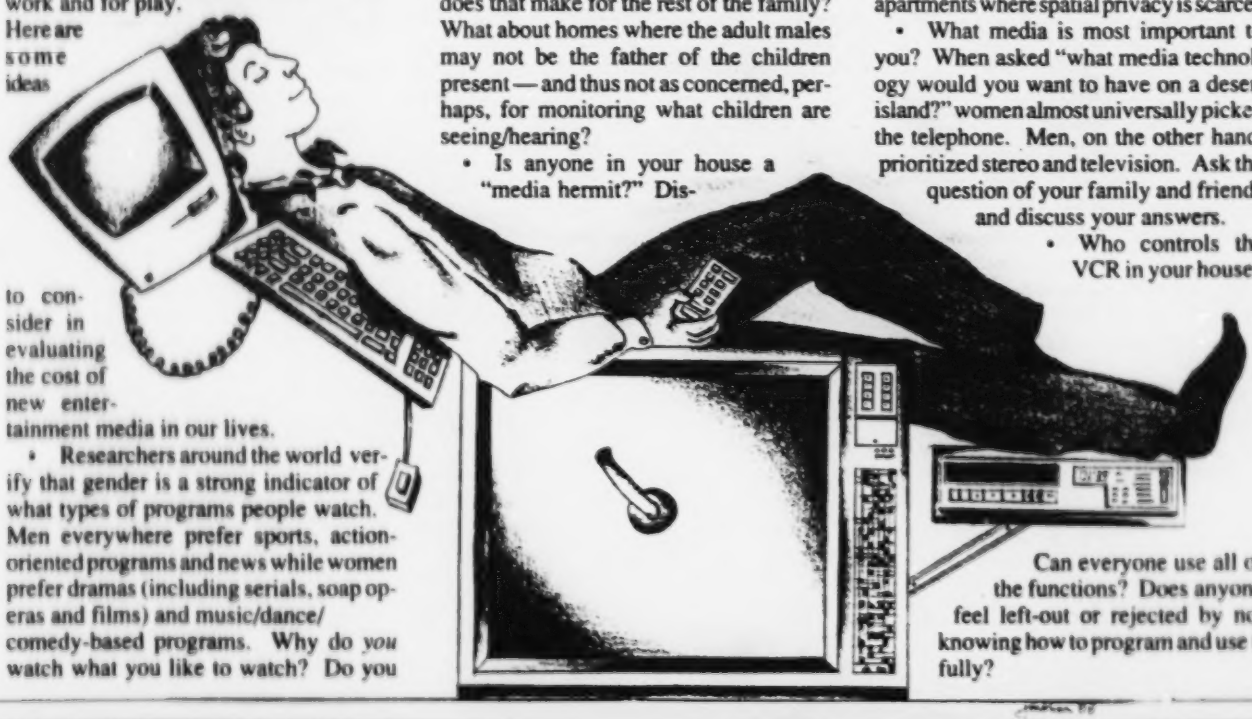
Re:Action

Boys' Toys: What Does Technology Cost?

From the research reports on these pages, it is clear that the cost of new technology goes far beyond the price tag. At the same time, we find our lives, and our leisure, enhanced by television, video, stereos and tape decks — as well as computers for work and for play.

Here are some ideas to consider in evaluating the cost of new entertainment media in our lives.



• Researchers around the world verify that gender is a strong indicator of what types of programs people watch. Men everywhere prefer sports, action-oriented programs and news while women prefer dramas (including serials, soap operas and films) and music/dance/comedy-based programs. Why do *you* watch what you like to watch? Do you talk about your preferences with others? Can you use television as a way to get to know others better?

• If males in the house dominate family viewing, and they prefer primarily sports and action, what kind of media "diet" does that make for the rest of the family? What about homes where the adult males may not be the father of the children present — and thus not as concerned, perhaps, for monitoring what children are seeing/hearing?

• Is anyone in your house a "media hermit?" Discuss whether computers, music video, even "Walkman" units create a "wall of sound" against the outside world. On the other hand, does technology provide the opportunity for personal "space" in crowded cities, neighborhoods or family apartments where spatial privacy is scarce?

• What media is most important to you? When asked "what media technology would you want to have on a desert island?" women almost universally picked the telephone. Men, on the other hand, prioritized stereo and television. Ask the question of your family and friends and discuss your answers.

• Who controls the VCR in your house? Can everyone use all of the functions? Does anyone feel left-out or rejected by not knowing how to program and use it fully?

DADS THROUGH THE DECADES

Thirty Years of TV Fathers

By Mark Crispin Miller

At first, Dad seemed to reign supreme in sitcom country — or at least in its better neighborhoods.

On the bulk of those shows set in the suburbs, Dad's authority around the house appeared to be the whole point of the spectacle. It was this implied paternalism that made most of those "comedies" so unamusing: Dad's status was, back then, no laughing matter. Despite their laugh tracks and bouncy themes, the real spirit of those shows was expressed in their daunting titles: *Make Room for Daddy* and *Father Knows Best* were pure and simple threats.

As the apparent ruler of the world, Dad, pushed around by no one, somehow deflated all of his inferiors — and all were his inferiors. Since we almost never saw him working, we had no sense that there was any class above his own; and he had no competition from below.

On those old sitcoms set among the proles, the husband and provider — like Riley or Ralph Kramden — wasn't competent enough to lord it over anyone, but was himself, in fact, the eternal jerk, a hapless fatso doomed to live in squalor, always trying to rise above it, always ending up worse off, not only just as poor but "in the doghouse" too.

In his well-appointed suburban home, on the other hand, Dad was subject to no such snideness, but was himself the ironic judge of all below him. He kept his underlings in line by setting an impossible example of self-possession, probity and sound judgment — the virtues of small business.

On the bulk of those shows set in the suburbs, Dad's authority appeared to be the whole point of the spectacle. Those shows featuring Dad's wife and kids were tellingly named, with half titles that took Dad's point of view, expressing his permanent exasperation at the foibles of his underlings: *Leave It to Beaver* (to screw things up), *My Little Margie* (needs a punch in the mouth), and *I Love Lucy* (in spite of everything).

Father restored authority by assertion of his superior Dadness and his chilling summons to "a little talk." These methods were unfailing and oddly terrifying, primarily directed against Dad's son, who was a permanent victim. We always knew that young Ricky, Rusty, Bud or Wally was going to try to prove himself — and the effort would backfire disastrously, leaving the poor schmuck shamed and lectured, taught a lesson by his serene and ever-watchful Dad.

The Dad-centered universe has become the biggest joke on television, with yesterday's paternalistic vision the standard object of burlesque.

The early sitcom also held Dad's other underlings in place. Mrs. Dad, for instance, was always trim, erect, loyal, like a well-bred whippet; but even she sometimes made trouble and had to be reminded how to roll over and play dead.

While the flattering images on those old shows concealed the truth about the father's plight, they also contradicted the prevailing bureaucratic trend with an inadvertent protest. Dad did not control his little world but only haunted it, as a specter from the early days of capitalism. Dad's impulses and desire to keep his family in one piece were opposed to the consumerist imperatives that now began to overrun our culture. With his emphasis on prudence, sobriety, self-discipline and thrift, he stood for the old ideal of self-denial that had sustained Our Way of Life since the 17th Century and that now threatened to impede it. That Puritan ethos was a boon as long as workers only had to earn and try to save, laboring to produce commodities for an upper class of buyers. Since World War I, however, the market had also demanded those same workers to buy and buy. Clearly, something had to give, and it would soon be Dad, the personification of an outmoded ideology and now an obvious drag on consumption.

In any event, the paternalistic moment soon passed. Long before Norman Lear, TV began to champion Dad's wives and kids on programs now contrived to please the actual wives and kids who watched the ads. By the mid-'60s, the titanic burgher of the early years was remarkably reduced, to be succeeded by pleasant nullities like the Dads of Patty Duke and Dennis the Menace, or mere straight men, like Samantha's husband on *Bewitched*.

Vanishing Authority

The early white-collar Dad was therefore utterly unlike the real white-collar workers in his audience. And Dad's real counterparts were no less insignificant around the house, now that the wife and kids were out shopping or bopping with their friends, taking their guidance not so much from father (who in real life could rarely be at home) as from the newspapers, the magazines, the movies, other wives and/or kids — and (more and more) from television.

Today, of course, the old Dad-centered universe has become the biggest and easiest joke on television, with yesterday's paternalistic vision the standard object of burlesque. In simply laughing off early sitcoms, however, we overlook their true perniciousness, as well as their implicit critical potential.

First of all, they did not serve to bolster any extant paternal authority within the middle class, but helped to conceal the

fact that by the '50s such authority had all but vanished. In fact, the virtues of small business as personified by Robert Young were becoming passé. It was already necessary then (as it still is) to get by on "personality" rather than through diligence and thrift, to negotiate with charm and savvy the subtle crosscurrents of an immense and impersonal bureaucracy.

The '60s clearly revealed Dad's threatened prerogative, not by any rise in real authority among women, but by the rising influence of TV itself and its corporate advertisers. In the culture of consumption, a man's home is not his castle but a temporary storage unit. A still housebound and subservient Mom was more powerful than her predecessors, like Jeannie the genie and Samantha the witch. Dad, who in the '50s answered to no one, was now presented as an underling like Jeannie's master, an army major pushed around by senior officers. Between Dad's wife and bosses, there was always an implicit understanding: Both they and he were eager to see Dad swallow his yearnings and strive for another raise.

This complicity carried over into the commercials, where the wife, sharing a little secret with the advertiser, would tip a wink to the camera when hubby wasn't looking, thereby demonstrating that her heart really belonged to General Mills or Proctor & Gamble. Here was the beginning of TV's pseudo-feminism, which now pervades prime time.

While today's female heroines are turned into cool young men, wearing suits and carrying major credit cards (yet still laboring under the requirement of being impossibly good looking), what today's comedies have done to men is more subtle.

The post-'60s sitcom deflates not just the working-class father but every would-be patriarch. Clayton on *Benson*, Frank on M*A*S*H, the boss on *9-to-5*, Dan Fielding on *Night Court*, are all laughable to the extent they presume to act like fathers. The only father figures who are not ridiculous are those who know enough to downplay their status and thereby blend in with the kids, like Michael Gross of *Family Ties* and Tom Bosley of *Happy Days*, a '70s version of a '50s patriarch who looks like a nice bear in a cartoon.

In the culture of consumption, a man's home is not his castle, but a temporary storage unit.

And yet power in the real world has not changed hands but remains precisely in the same unseen and collective hands that have gripped it throughout this century. Once purified of Dad's stern image, TV was perfectly resolved to carry on the advertisers' long campaign for our absolute surrender.

At first glance, the most beloved of TV Dads, Bill Cosby's Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable, seems a special case. In his perfect brownstone he never raises his hand or fist, but retains the complete devotion of his wife and kids by making goofy faces. In fact, the happy Huxtables nearly vanish amid the porcelain, stainless steel and mahogany fabric of their lives. In this milieu, Cliff's blackness, although unstated, serves an affirmative purpose. "Look!" he shows us, "Even I can have it all."

Like the early fathers, Cliff always wins, but this modern Dad subverts his kids not by evincing the sort of calm power that once made Jim Anderson so daunting but by seeming to subvert himself at the same time. This Dad is the playful type who strikes his kids as a peach until they realize, years later, what a subtle thug he really was.

In short, the point of TV comedy is that there can be no transcendence. Such is the meaning of Dad's long decline since the '50s. Because he would have stood out as an archaic model of resistance to the regime of advertising, Dad was reduced from a complicated lie to a simple joke. But more subtle and therefore more dangerous is the incorporation of the commercial message into Dad's own ethos and being, as on the *Cosby* show. Such a Dad wins all battles by appearing to be a kid — and he does it among a world too crammed and lustrous to seem like his, or anyone's, personal achievement. The lesson of commercialism has been incorporated into the role.

From the book Watching Television *edited by Todd Gitlin. Copyright © 1986 by Mark Crispin Miller. Published by arrangement with Pantheon Books, a Division of Random House, Inc.*

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THE NEW MAN: THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

By John Lehrer

When *thirtysomething* character Michael Steadman referred to his relationship with his prospective boss as "Samurais crossing swords," it was a poetic simile for his feelings about a worrying personality conflict.

But the conflict itself was a metaphor for something else. In a rare example of television realism, *thirtysomething* has broken new ground in portraying the conflicts and feelings of its male characters. Michael and his friends Elliott Weston and Gary Shepherd talk about their feelings; they're vulnerable. When they make mistakes they're willing to admit it. And sometimes they get the chance to attain — or at least attempt — to live up to their ideals.

For married men, at least, helping around the house, being involved fathers and supportive husbands to the '80s professional woman are part of that ideal. So we see men who leave work early to pick up their kids at day care. Husbands more at home in the kitchen than their wives. Male tears over a disappointment or the death of a loved one. Have themes of male liberation come of age in popular entertainment?

New Roles

Throughout the '70s and '80s, as feminism became a cultural truism, movies and television struggled to reflect the shifting balance and expanded roles of men and women.

In movies, Dustin Hoffman's role as a single parent in *Kramer vs. Kramer* in 1979 became a striking instance of the new sensibility about male characterizations. Although still proceeding from some traditional assumptions (when a woman cares for a child, it's routine; when a man becomes the caretaker, it's news), the film was one of the first to explore the nurturing side of men's personalities. *Kramer vs. Kramer* still fares well when compared to the recent *Three Men and a Baby*, a remake of a French hit that mines similar subject matter for laughs but does provide an unusual view of men involved in the routine tasks of caring for a baby.

Hoffman's early '80s blockbuster, *Tootsie*, even dared to put a man in a woman's body in order to illuminate the stereotypes that both sexes hold of each other. Although earlier movies (*Some Like It Hot*, *Charley's Aunt*) had featured characters in drag, the seriousness and fullness of the portrayal of Tootsie was a breakthrough.

Although blockbusters continue to feature action, violence and conventional muscular heroes, moviemakers seem freer to explore the masculine side of issues ranging from bonding and maturity (*Diner*), father-son relationships (*Da*, *I Never Sang For My Father*) and mascu-

From thirtysomething*'s male bonding to the father-as-mother-and-father roles of* My Two Dads*, movies and television are cautiously exploring men's changing relationships.*

line roles and ideals (*The Great Santini*)

Pioneering Images

Television's picture of masculine roles has also been evolving, at least on some pioneering shows. The most striking example, Steven Bochco's *Hill Street Blues*, became the first action-adventure show to use open-ended plots and an ensemble cast to draw realistic, multilayered pictures of both men and women. Although very different in background and style from its less action-oriented successors, the personal triumphs, pain and closeness shared by *Hill Street*'s men and women broke new ground for the presentation of personal relationships on television.

So what about today's entertainment — both television and film? *Field of Dreams*, one of a crop of summer-1989 movies that have father-son relationships at their core (curiously, the action-adventure films *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* are others), uses baseball as a metaphor for both eternity and the mystical bond between the generations. By the time its hero Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) meets a youthful version of his long-dead father on the baseball diamond, the audience has become fully attuned to the significance of the meeting.

Ray also voices a fear that both sexes can resonate to: "I'm scared to death I'm turning into my father. I never forgave him for turning old." Only the magical meeting of father and son — the kind of meeting most of us long for but don't often get in life — can resolve the conflict.

Unsafe At Home

The death of Michael's father in *thirtysomething*'s second season provided a chance to probe similar issues, although lacking a magic baseball diamond, the resolution was less clear. Most of the episodes in the Emmy Award-winning series created by Marshall Herskovitz and Ed Zwick, focus more on the issues of every-day life: child care, marital disputes, expectations of friendships, balancing home and work. Zwick notes that the show is motivated by "the currency of our everyday lives — parents dying, changes in businesses, changes in relationships. These sorts of things weren't being done realistically on TV."

Overall, *thirtysomething* does seem to present a new view of manhood. Sensitive, nurturing men, aware of themselves and their feelings, take the spotlight.

In a case in point, when Michael and Elliott's business fails, Michael and his wife and daughter are living on credit cards while he looks for work. He has to struggle with the choice between jobs that don't include his partner Elliott and a desirable job for both of them at a prestigious ad firm run by a CEO Michael considers an arrogant, egotistical jerk. What's a practical man of integrity to do in a situation like this? A pressure situation? Definitely. Easy answers? No way.

Although the show deals with issues such as responsibility, fidelity, competitiveness, idealism and loyalty to family and friends, it does so — fortunately — not in terms of abstractions but in terms of the characters' interactions."

From the Maverick brothers to the latest detective shows, television's men have traveled, joked, fought and bled together for decades. Many critics have long thought that the appeal of cop and detective shows rested at least partly on the friendships between the buddies in the police car or the patrolroom.

But in actuality, three-dimensional male characters — let alone relationships — are hard to find on the tube. Sitcom men are eliminated almost by definition, since on these shows the joke's the thing and the characters' primary function is to play off one another in order to create humor.

Eliminate, too, male heroes in current adventure shows. They might be amiable sorts with principles — Jim Rockford and Thomas Magnum are classic examples — but, in general, these men have no interior lives whatsoever. Character development is incidental on adventure shows; the focus is the action of the chase, the crime or the shootout.

Of current dramas, the most popular show with seemingly realistic male characters is *L.A. Law*, where lawyers Michael Kuzak, Stuart Markowitz and Victor Sifuentes are multisided characters whose strengths and weaknesses are not only clearly visible but an essential part of the ensemble plots.

Still, there are problems with *L.A. Law*'s men. Of the principals, only Markowitz appears to have a life away from work. Some of the characters (Arnie Becker, Douglas Brackman, Jr.) are played almost as caricatures. And the ensemble cast is so large that it's hard for a viewer to get to know any character well.

But Markowitz is a new TV man through and through. Indeed, he and his wife Ann Kelsey are characters playing out an original gender switch. She's the hard-driving workaholic executive; he's the romantic tenderheart who wants her to have a baby.

Visually enhancing this switch in gender stereotypes is Ann's height, which doesn't seem to bother the diminutive Stuart. Now here's a man who not only is not threatened by being in relationship with a taller woman (that pops one stereotype), but through the strength of his character leaves us with the unmistakable message that physical prowess is not the only measure of a man (thereby sinking another cliche).

One episode involving Markowitz stands out in particular. The story line

Unscrambling Mixed Messages

"Between 1950 and 1970, the most respected media role model for men was John Wayne. In the '80s, we're caught between Ashley Wilkes and Rhett Butler. Younger men pick rock stars and sports figures as role models, especially public figures who project an image of caring, such as Bruce Springsteen."

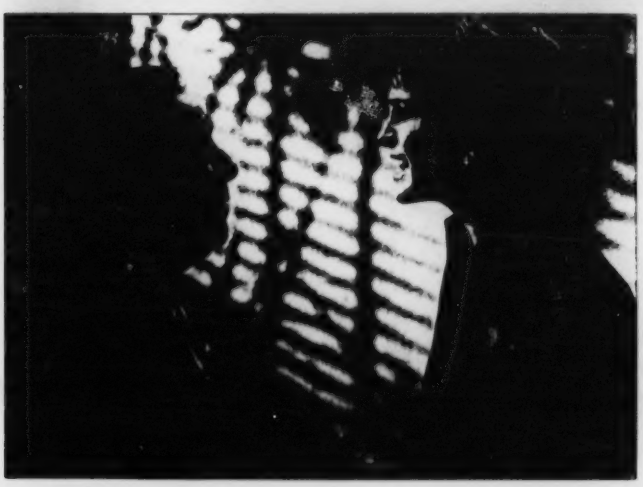
•

"Men's confusion about important areas of their lives is reflected in the popularity of crime and action TV with men. Shows like *thirtysomething* and *L.A. Law*, in which men experience friendship with each other, are exceptions. The idea that men — like women — need friendship with each other is kind of revolutionary for TV."

•

"Fatherhood is a big issue for men today. Many men perceived their fathers as being distant and absent. They want to be involved in their children's lives. The media picks up these feelings. But media portrayals also reflect the reluctance of many fathers to get involved in the 'hands on and dirty' part of fatherhood — from changing diapers to spooning baby food. The popular film *Three Men and a Baby*, which actually showed men involved in all aspects of baby care, did show men performing all the tasks of caring for a baby. It also portrayed the idea that babies are how men stop being little boys and grow up, a message that runs through a lot of media."

— from an interview with Michael Kimmel, professor of communications, State University of NY/Stony Brook



In an original gender switch, L.A. Law's Ann Kelsey is the hard-driving professional, while her husband Stuart is the romantic tenderheart.

involved a ridiculous father-son dispute that lead to an improbable, but riveting, scene in which the father and preteen son are pitted against each other across the conference room table at McKenzie, Brackman. The father, a highly successful executive with little time for his son, is being sued by the boy for hitting him.

Ann, representing the father, is completely caught up in the legal game that is unfolding. But Markowitz has another, more human perspective: "Fathers and sons don't sue each other," he announces, "Fathers and sons hug each other." Stunned by his emotional display but eventually swayed by his attitude, father and son proceed to make up. Ann looks sheepishly at her husband, while Stuart, still unable to understand how the conflict got to that point, walks out of the room shaking his head.

It is a wonderful scene portraying male tenderness and sensitivity in its fullness. Just what TV needs more of.

Striking Out

A different view of males on television was exactly what former *Cagney and Lacey* producer Steve Brown was trying to provide in the brief eight-episode life of *Men*, a show that many thought initially had the potential to add a new dimension to the portrayal of men on television.

The *Men* of the title were four thirtyish former high school buddies struggling to establish careers and relationships in Baltimore. The common thread was a weekly poker game tying them all together.

Like *thirtysomething*, the brief life of *Men*'s characters was based on Brown's personal interests. What was new was his conscious desire to portray men's special experience. As he puts it, "Every writer works out of his own background. I realized I had a lot more experience as a man that at any other thing I'd ever done in my life, and it was an area that had never been addressed on television."

Crafted to focus on the characters' interactions with each other and responses to the changing circumstances in their lives, *Men* seemed to promise meaty portraits and situations. But it was cancelled after only five episodes, all at the bottom of the ratings ladder.

What went wrong? Brown points to the show's brief running time, which didn't allow it to find an audience, and its unfortunate time slot at 10 p.m. on Saturday nights. Some critics also referred to awkward dialogue and a lack of believability of some of the characters.

My own opinion, after watching three tapes and reading the script for the fourth episode, is that even though it did have some problems, *Men* died a premature death. Although the characters were somewhat stereotyped and hadn't yet found their voices by the time the show was cancelled, *Men* was a worthwhile effort nonetheless for the innovative themes that Brown explores: death, responsibility, fathers-sons, unemployment, courage, growing old and parenting.

"I always find it's easier to work from a specific incident rather than an abstract idea," he said. "In the pilot, one of the main characters — a cop — gets killed, and the others, including his brother, have to deal with that. Later, they find out he was on the take, and that creates more conflict.

"In another episode, which didn't get made, I started with a mugging, not with the idea of courage," Brown said. "The three characters respond very differently. One is confrontative, one is practical — 'Here, take the money,' — and the third, who hesitates for a moment instead of acting, thinks of himself as a coward.

"This is something I felt I had a mandate to explore. Courage — standing up for yourself, facing conflict — has been a prized male virtue in every society. I go on the assumption that if something interests me, it will interest others."

Brown dismisses the notion that viewers aren't interested in a serious program about men, or that the networks won't support it. "I would hope that the show's rejection doesn't mean that audiences couldn't care less about male issues, but rather that we just need to know how to package them to make the audience come back. I'd like to think we'll find a new way to do it."

Private Lives

Do Herskovitz and Zwick, as well as Brown, represent a new breed of Hollywood producer? All three deny their shows represent a conscious attempt to cover "male liberation" issues. Instead they say they are simply interested in people's lives and draw upon their own experiences for material.

Have themes of male liberation come of age in popular entertainment?

The fact that Herskovitz and Zwick are young husbands and fathers (Brown is single) — as well as successful producers in the media industry — means, however, that their "own experiences" include issues that another generation may not have been concerned about. Another successful colleague, *Family Ties* producer Gary David Goldberg (who was not able to be interviewed for this article because of production schedules on his new feature film titled *Dad*), is a case in point. A passionate advocate of day care — he stumped with Patricia Schroeder (D-Colorado) on the Great American Family Tour promoting child care issues in the 1988 campaign — Goldberg led negotiations with Paramount Studio management in

1987 to put in the first day-care center ever to be established on a Hollywood studio production lot.

About the same time, he also developed a short-lived, but interesting network comedy, *Day by Day*, about a family that starts a day-care center in their home. Coincidence? Hardly.

If *thirtysomething*'s plot lines reflect Herskovitz and Zwick's particular kind of lives, some of their dreams would be shared by most men. In a particularly appealing fantasy sequence on *thirtysomething*, Michael, aching for the opportunity to act decisively, imagines himself on the basketball court saving a critical playoff game for the Philadelphia 76ers. He catches a pass, sails through the air and stuffs the ball through the hoop as the buzzer sounds. The chance to be a hero, an impulse all men feel, is contained in the moment and depicted with dignity, grace and humor.

Entertainment media are not developed to provide rites of passage for men (or women, either). But in a society with all too few rituals and many disturbances in the father-son bonding that is supposed to transmit male identity, it does seem reasonable to assume that many men, particularly young ones, look to television and film portraits as models.

"We all make choices in our lives," Steve Brown says. "We all live — at least I think men do — in the land of shoulda, coulda, woulda."

The shoot-em-up — and the punchline — still dominate many plot lines in both films and television. Nevertheless, the best of entertainment is beginning to show men grappling with new choices. Although still uncertain, the trend is encouraging.

Maybe they shoulda, coulda, woulda keep trying.

John Lehrer is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles, and a long-time volunteer for Media&Values.

Grown men weep at* Field of Dreams, *and they are not crying at the return of the Chicago Black Sox.

Caryn Jones, *New York Times*

Singing a Song For Men's Issues

Geof Morgan sat strumming his guitar in front of 25 sex offenders at the Walla Walla State prison in Washington. Mostly lifers, of diverse races, ages and appearance, they were intimidating. But they listened intently to the music.

When Morgan played *Take Back the Night*, a song about a woman who was raped and killed in a Pacific Northwest town, there was silence. Morgan worried about whether the song was an appropriate choice for the occasion. But after the performance a prisoner approached him with tears in his eyes and said, "You know, that's the first time I ever thought about what my victims felt."

Morgan was both elated and saddened by that response to his "music for changing men," the unique brand of country/Western/folk he applies to men's concerns and issues from homophobia to fatherhood. "There was a very powerful moment when the prisoner's humanity came through. But in that kind of place, where you have to be so tough to survive, he'll get no support for those feelings."

Support for men's feelings is precisely what Morgan aims to do with his music. His songs are his primary — but not his only — means of involvement in the men's movement, which he sees as "the transformation of men's lives" politically and socially as both men and women move beyond sexual stereotypes.

Morgan currently has three albums on Flying Fish Records, and he performs frequently at community concerts, male responsibility programs and conferences about men's issues. The "I never thought about this before" response is common, Morgan says.

His themes run from the familiar and humorous to the dramatic and poignant. About pregnancy he sings: "*...she's five months into a magic that put the feeling into her eyes / five months into the miracle of life...*" At the other end of the spectrum he writes, "*...he was feeling sick and tired of being poor / and she forgot the chain when she opened up the door / and he used her so quickly he didn't feel that great / but at least there was someone he could dominate.*"

Songs can't deal with issues in depth, but they can help people generate the discussion and understanding he's working for, Morgan believes. "We want to feel good about the work we're doing. It's not enough for stars like Prince to contribute money to causes when their music still reflects negative views."

If society transforms its views of men, it just might decrease the pressures that create imprisoned sex offenders. Then the need for songs about rape and violence would no longer exist.

– Kerry Skorlich

To order Geof Morgan's records, see p. 23. Kerry Skorlich is a Media&Values *intern from the Univ. of Southern Cal.*

Horatio Alger Revisited:

MEDIA MYTHS AND THE REALITY OF MEN'S WORK

By Ian Harris

The dominant image of the American male portrayed on television, in film and in magazines depicts a white-collar gentleman living in the suburbs in affluent circumstances. These individuals own American Express credit cards and buy the latest model cars. From Ozzie and Harriet to Bill Cosby, these images occupy a powerful place in the American psyche and set standards for male behavior. They run the media and the large corporations. They speak to us through radios and television. They teach our children. They are not only standard bearers but also the image makers who provide a model for male expectations.

While entertainment programs often create the stereotype of the violent adventurer, advertising campaigns used to promote American products create the deceptive view that the majority of men enjoy the privileges of white-collar professional status. But these images are a myth. In reality, as the accompanying table indicates, few achieve the success portrayed by media images.

Of those men fortunate enough to be employed at all, most work in jobs where they cannot live out the media's version of "the American dream." According to 1981 U.S. government statistics, individuals who fit the category "Males in Professional White Collar Occupations" account for only 15 percent of all employed men, or eight percent of the total male population. Yet certainly they are not the only men satisfied with their professional lives. The non-professional technical occupations, representing an additional 27 percent of employed men, include engineers, skilled craftsmen and other technicians who experience relatively high status and success. Some males in blue-collar jobs and service and farm occupations also earn good salaries and, by their own accounts, feel successful in their work and in their lives. Yet men in all classes are affected by white collar professional images broadcast through the media and rarely supplemented by images of men in other job categories and occupations. The restriction of work images to wealthy white collar professionals has severe consequences. Raised in a society that honors the Horatio Alger myth, most men believe that a man who works hard will get ahead. Male sex role standards describe a life where American men are supposed to be good fathers, contribute to their communities and occupy positions of power and wealth. The reality of most men's lives, however, is very different from those media-promoted financial and professional success images.

The media myth that most men enjoy the material benefits of the successful white-collar professional is a hoax.

Most Men's Lives

With 71 percent of U.S. men making less than $25,000 annually in 1984, relatively few male workers and their families can approach the standards of consumerism portrayed by television and advertising. The media myth that most men enjoy or have access to the material benefits of the successful white-collar professional is a hoax. Most men will never get status jobs. The vast majority of men either work in occupations other than white collar, are institutionalized, unemployed or have dropped out of the active work force. However, their stories are not told in the

media and their plight is ignored.

The 45 percent of working men in blue-collar jobs "man" the factories and other skilled or unskilled trades. Although often taking great pride in their work, many of them labor in positions that offer little or no opportunities for advancement and that may be dull, repetitive and dangerous. Their lives are marked by economic stress, they usually have little or no control over their working conditions and are increasingly threatened by company shifts to cheaper overseas labor and other contractions of the global work force.

As today's economic shakeups threaten their jobs, many men feel inadequate in the face of a media culture that venerates executives in three-piece suits.

Although always the unsung heroes of the U.S. economy, their current media invisibility is something of a change. From 1950 to 1978, this group of men enjoyed some economic security, and media images of the happy, beer-drinking blue-collar worker abounded in the broad range of ads and commercials and such TV programs as *The Life of Riley*.

Although these men are excluded from the mediated version of the American dream, it is incorrect to assume that men who do achieve some measure of white-collar success necessarily lead more fulfilling lives. The majority of white-collar men spend their lives battling within highly competitive organizations that are so stressful that working within them predisposes them to cancer, heart attack and other stress-related diseases.

Displaced from the labor statistics as they are from society, underclass men lead desperate lives. Seventy percent of these hard-pressed males belong to minority groups. As the migrant workers, prisoners, welfare recipients, homeless street people and patients in mental hospitals, the underclass appears in entertainment programming mainly as criminals. They are seen as a threat to society, but the portraits drawn of them seldom probe the violent worlds that shaped them and their constant fights — often unsuccessful — to survive.

Underclass men do not have regular work. Their hustles for survival include part-time work at low wages, robbery, pimping, drug pushing and other illegal activities. Many end up in prison when they break the law to earn their livelihoods. In fact, prison becomes a sort of brutal haven to escape the viciousness of the street. For the thousands of men of this class, life has no future, few possessions and little purpose. Many are filled with anger at a system that denies them access to the cultural norms of success.

Whether employed or unemployed, whether blue or white collar, men in the United States share a common alienation regarding the conditions of their employment. This alienation is rooted in the realization that a man's work (or lack of work) is at odds with his personal goals.

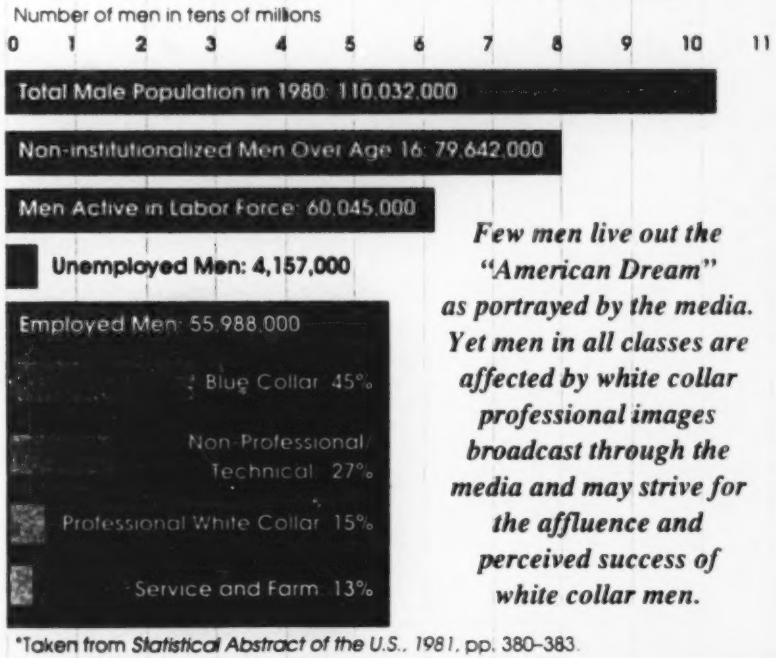
Unfortunately, male socialization does not help men cope with the realities of the modern workplace. Indeed, male training is designed to create good workers, not full human beings. To cope with deep-felt insecurities, men learn to put up a facade that they are competent and in charge of their destiny. The intense competitiveness of the workplace causes men to be distrustful of their peers, preventing real communication and empathy with others.

These problems in men's lives have become issues for the men's movement. They are also media issues to the degree that the movement seeks to shatter media myths that set sex-role expectations. The mostly white, middle-class leaders of the movement are shaped by the media they see and hear. They are largely ignorant of the problems of most men in the United States, in part because the media seldom, if ever, realistically present underclass and working-class existence.

The media and society as a whole need to bury the popular myth that male success consists of making money. Instead of glorifying male violence, they should portray the pain that causes it. Let's create a new American myth where men are concerned human beings promoting a better life for all creatures on this planet. Liberation is a long and difficult struggle that requires the economic transformation of society as well as the alteration of personal relationships. The media has played its role in creating the problem. It must also be a part of the solution.

Ian Harris is chair of the department of educational policy and community studies at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee and author of the book Peace Education. *He has been active in the men's movement since 1976.*

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES OF MALES IN THE UNITED STATES*


Number of men in tens of millions
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
Total Male Population in 1980: 110,032,000
Non-institutionalized Men Over Age 16: 79,642,000
Men Active in Labor Force: 60,045,000
Unemployed Men: 4,157,000
Employed Men: 55,988,000
Blue Collar 45%
Non-Professional/ Technical 27%
Professional White Collar 15%
Service and Farm 13%

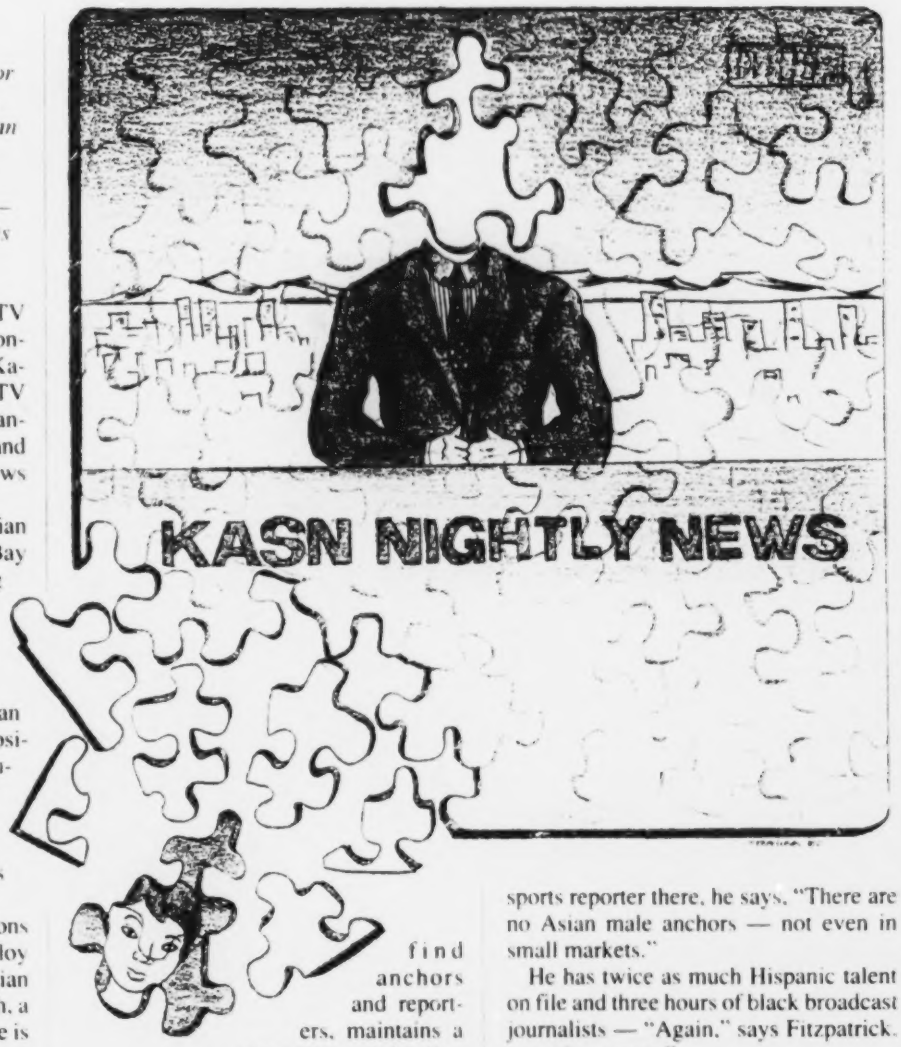
Few men live out the "American Dream" as portrayed by the media. Yet men in all classes are affected by white collar professional images broadcast through the media and may strive for the affluence and perceived success of white collar men.

*Taken from *Statistical Abstract of the U.S.*, 1981, pp. 380-383.

WHY ARE THERE NO ASIAN MALE NEWS ANCHORS?

By Ben Fong-Torres

In 1986, the year the San Francisco Chronicle *published this story, Rick Quan was a sports director and anchor at KITV in Honolulu.. In 1987, Quan joined KPIX and became the first Asian male anchor on Bay Area television. The perception of Asian men by the media — as well as other minorities — is still an important issue in most parts of the country.*



Connie Chung, the best-known Asian TV newswoman in the country, is a nationally-known network anchor. Ken Kashiwahara, the best-known Asian TV newsman, is chief of ABC's San Francisco bureau; his reports pop up here and there on ABC's newscasts and other news related programs.

Wendy Tokuda, the best-known Asian TV newswoman in the San Francisco Bay Area, is a co-anchor of KPIX's evening news. David Louie, the most-established Asian TV newsman, is a field reporter, covering the Peninsula for KGO.

And that's the way it is: among Asian American broadcasters, the glamour positions — the anchor chairs, whose occupants earn more than $500,000 a year in the major markets — go to the women; the men are left outside, in the field, getting by on reporters' wages that top out at about $80,000.

The four Bay Area television stations that present regular newscasts employ more than 40 anchors. Only two are Asian Americans: Tokuda and Emerald Yeh, a KRON co-anchor on weekends. There is no Asian male in an anchor position, and there has never been one.

None of the two dozen broadcasters this reporter spoke to could name a male Asian news anchor working anywhere in the United States.

Don Fitzpatrick, a TV-talent headhunter whose job is to help television stations find anchors and reporters, maintains a video library in his San Francisco office of 9,000 people on the air in the top 150 markets.

In regard to Asian men, "We have nothing to show news directors," he says, "I can show you probably every Asian male in this country in 20 minutes." With the exception of a weather reporter here and a sports reporter there, he says, "There are no Asian male anchors — not even in small markets."

He has twice as much Hispanic talent on file and three hours of black broadcast journalists — "Again," says Fitzpatrick, "mostly women."

Wendy Tokuda calls the disparity between Asian men and women "striking." "It is wrong," she says. "It's a phenomenon that can't be ignored. It's something Asians are very aware of and troubled by. There's got to be a reason this is happening."

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There are, in fact, several reasons proposed by broadcasters, station executives, talent agents and others.

• Asian men have been connected for generations with negative stereotypes. Asian women have also been saddled with false images, but, according to Tokuda, "In this profession, these images work *for* women and *against* men."

• Asian women are perceived as attractive partners for the typical news anchor: a white male. "TV stations," says Henry Der, director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, " have discovered that having an Asian female with a white male is an attractive combination." And, adds Sam Chu Lin, a former reporter for both KRON and KPIX adds, "they like the winning formula. If an Asian woman works in one market, then another market duplicates it. So why test for an Asian male?"

• Asian women allow television stations to fulfill two equal-opportunity slots with one hiring.

• Asian males are typically encouraged by parents toward careers in the sciences and away from communication.

• Because there are few Asian men on the air, younger Asian males have no racial peers as role models. With few men getting into the profession, news directors hire from a minuscule talent pool.

And, according to Sumi Haru, a producer at KTLA in Los Angeles, the situation is worsening as stations are being purchased and taken over by large corporations. At her own station, the public affairs department is being trimmed. "We're concerned with what little Asian representation we have on the air." said Haru, an officer of the Association of Asian-Pacific American Artists.

Missing Anchorman

Helen Chang, a communications major at the University ofCalifornia/Berkeley, now working in Washington, D.C., made the missing Asian anchorman the subject of her honors thesis. Chang spoke with Asian anchorwomen in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York as well as locally. "To capsulize the thesis," she says, "It is an executive decision based on a perception of an Asian image. On an executive decision level, the image of the Asian woman is acceptable."

"It's such a white-bread medium; it's the survival of the blandest," says a male Asian reporter who asked to remain anonymous. A native San Franciscan, this reporter once had ambitions to be an anchor, but after several static years at his station, "I've decided to face reality. I have a white man's credentials but it doesn't mean a thing. I'm not white. How can it not be racism?"

"Racism is a strong word that scares people," says Tokuda.

"But whatever's going on here is some ugly animal. It's not like segregation in the South. What it is is a very subtle bias."

To Mario Machado, a Los Angeles-based reporter and producer, it's not that subtle. Machado, who is half-Chinese and half-Portuguese, is a former daytime news anchor in Los Angeles who's had the most national television exposure after Kashiwahara. Being half-Chinese, he says, has given him no advantage in getting work. "It's had no bearing at all. There's a move on against Asians, period, whether part-Asian or full-Asian.

"For a lot of people, the World War II image of Japanese, unfortunately, is the operative image of what Asian males are all about."

Bruno Cohen, KPIX news director

TV executives, he charges, "don't really want minority males to be totally successful. They don't want minority men perceived as strong, bright, and articulate. We can be cute second bananas, like Robert Ito on *Quincy*. But having an Asian woman — that's always been the feeling from World War II, I guess. You bring back an Asian bride, and she's cute and delicate. But a strong minority man with authority and conviction — I don't think people are ready for that."

Bruno Cohen, news director at KPIX, agrees that "for a lot of people, the World War II image of Japanese, unfortunately, is the operative image about what Asian males are all about."

That image, Serena Chen, producer and host of *Asians Now!* on KTVU says, was one of danger. "They may be small, but they're strong. So watch out, white women!"

The Vietnam War and recent movies like *Rambo*, says Machado, add to the historic negativity. "You never went to war against Asian women," he says. "You always went to war against Asian men."

Today, says Tokuda, Asian men are saddled with a twin set of stereotypes. "They're either wimpy — they have real thick glasses and they're small and they have an accent and they're carrying a lot of cameras — or they're murderous gangsters." "Or," says Les Kumagai, a former KPIX intern now working for a Reno TV station, "they're businessmen who are going to steal your jobs."

"The Asian woman is viewed as property, and the Asian male has been denied sexuality," says Chen. "Eldridge Cleaver created a theory of the black male being superglorified in the physical and superdecreased in the mental. It's very difficult for people to see a successful black male unless he's an athlete or a performer. If he's in a corporate situation, everyone says, 'Wow, he's the product of affirmative action.' That theory holds that in this society, people who have potential to have power have to be male, and have both mental and physical [strength] to be the superior male. In this society, they took away the black male's mental and gave him the physical. The Asian male has been denied the physical and given the mental."

"I'm seeking out the best people I can find," Cohen said. "If I put an Asian male anchor on the air who is not effective, I think the people who'd lose are the Asian males. I don't think I would ever put an Asian male anchor on the air unless I thought the guy was phenomenal."

Asian women are perceived as attractive partners for the typical news anchor: a white male.

At KGO, news director Harry Fuller says he's "bothered" by the fact that his station has no Asian anchor. "I live in the Richmond district with its heavy Asian population. I'm reminded of it every day." Veteran KRON reporter Vic Lee listens to a tally of stereotypes and images associated with Asian men. "All those reasons limit where an Asian American can work. I've always said to my wife, 'If I'm fired here, there's only a couple of cities I can go to and get a job based on how well I do my work, not how I look or what color my skin is.' There are cities with Asian American populations, and you can count them on one hand: Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, and possibly Washington."

Singapore Girl

In contrast to the threatening Asian male, says Les Kumagai, "Females are 'exotic.' They're not threatening to non-Asian females and they're attractive to non-Asian males. You're looking to draw the 18-45-year-old female demographic for advertising. You just won't get that draw from an Asian male."

Headhunter Don Fitzpatrick agrees. "Watching my tapes, women in general are much more aggressive than men... A guy will say, 'This is bull. If I stay in school and get into accounting or law...' And they have a career change. A woman will go to Chico or Medford and will get into L.A. or New York."

Most of the men who do make it in broadcasting describe serendipitous routes into the field, and all of them express contentment with being reporters. "Maybe I'm covering my butt by denying that I want to anchor," says Kumagai, "but I do get a bigger charge being out in the field."

Still, most Asian male reporters do think about the fame and fortune of an anchor slot. Those thoughts quickly meet up against reality.

Mitch Farris rejects any notion of a conspiracy by news directors against Asian American men. In fact, he says, they are "desperate" for Asian male applicants. "Just about any news director would strive to get an Asian on the air and wouldn't mind a man."

To which Machado shouts, "We're here! We're here! We're looking for work."

This article is a revised version of an article that appeared in the "Datebook" section of the San Francisco Chronicle *July 13, 1986, and is printed with its permission. Ben Fong-Torres is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer.*

MALE BASHING ON THE RISE

By Fredric Hayward

By far, "male bashing" is the most popular topic in my current talk shows and interviews. Reporters and television crews have come to me from as far away as Denmark, Australia and Germany to investigate this American phenomenon. What is going on, they ask? Why do women want it? Why do men allow it?

The trend is particularly rampant in advertising. In a survey of a thousand random advertisements, 100 percent of the jerks singled out in male-female relationships were male. There were no exceptions. That is, whenever there was a husband-wife or boyfriend-girlfriend interaction, the one who was dumped on was the male.

One hundred percent of the ignorant ones were male; 100 percent of the ones who lost a contest were male. One hundred percent of the ones who smelled bad (mouthwash and detergent commercials) were male; 100 percent of the ones who were put down without retribution were male. (Sometimes the male would insult the female, but she was always sure to get him back in spades before the commercial ended.) One hundred percent of the objects of anger were male; 100 percent of the objects of violence were male.

In entertainment, the trend is similarly discouraging. Some television shows are little more than a bunch of anti-male jokes strung together. Deciding to count the phenomenon during an episode of *The Golden Girls*, I found 31 women's insults of men compared to two men's insults of women. Family sitcoms like *The Cosby Show* or *Family Ties* have an unwritten

"Worst Entertainment Promotion" in the 2nd Annual Men's Rights, Inc. Awards for the Best & Worst in Advertising.

rule that mothers are *never* to be the butt of jokes or made to look foolish.

As to literature, just glance through the recent best-seller lists. There is no anti-female literature that matches the anti-male tone of *Smart Women, Foolish Choices, Men Who Can't Love* or *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*. Two authors told me about pressure from their editors to create anti-male titles as a way of increasing sales.

Products also reflect the popularity of hating men. One owner of a greeting card store reports that male-bashing cards are her biggest-selling line. A variety of post-its from 3M such as "The more I know about men, the more I like my dog" are big sellers. A 3M spokesperson added that they have no intention of selling similarly anti-female products. Walk through any T-shirt store and compare the number of anti-female slogans to anti-male slogans. Women might take offense at sexual innuendos, but there is a qualitative difference between something that is interpreted as insulting and something that is intended as insulting.

The current male-bashing trend appeals to the female consumer, upon whose whims our economy depends. It is comforting for women to think that men are always at fault, while women are always innocent. Interestingly, male-bashing even appeals to the male mentality. Forced to compete with each other, in contrast to the way women are allowed to empathize with each other, men enjoy male-bashing (as long as the bashee is another male). Males have long had negative self-images, and every man has a deep fantasy that he can be better than all other men... the hero who will earn women's love by rescuing her from all the other rotten men.

For society's sake, however, and for the health of future male-female relationships, we had better start to curb the excesses of male-bashing. The alternative can only lead to a men's movement as angry with women, and far more violent, than the women's movement has been toward men.

A lecturer and writer on all men's issues, Fredric Hayward creates multi-media presentations on "Men's Images in Media." He is executive director of Men's Rights, Inc., an anti-sexist non-profit corporation in Sacramento, California.

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"Stale Roles & Tight Buns"

VIDEO EXAMINES IMAGES OF MEN IN ADVERTISING

By Tom Nakayama

"What is a man?"

This may seem like an odd question to be asking, but it's one that's answered all the time in print ads and television commercials.

Ads and commercials, with their images of cowboys, successful businessmen, construction workers, sophisticates in tuxedos, muscle men and others, advertisements may seem to be flashing by casually. But they actually represent countless — if often unconscious — decisions by writers, advertisers, producers, programmers and others about what men look like, say and even think.

Advertising narrows the definition of what it means to be a man.

As each ad answers the questions: "What images of men will sell my product to men? To women?" They shape viewers' images of men as well.

Stale Roles and Tight Buns, a video and slide-show project of the men's cooperative OASIS (Men Organized Against Sexism and Institutionalized Stereotypes), freeze-frames these images for a closer look at what they say about contemporary cultural constructions of masculinity.

According to the advertising archetypes presented, men are in charge, self-contained and often alone. When shown with other men, they seem ready to unleash their aggression at any moment. When shown with women, they must be dominant. The male body can be used to sell any product, but whatever the fashion, the air of aloofness and barely controlled power is palpable.

Chosen from among the thousands of selections in mainstream media by OASIS volunteers, these images of men from hardhats building dams to captains of industry rewarding themselves with the best whiskey — are powerful and disturbing. Only a few more recent ads focus on men in families, men with children, or men shown in partnership with women or other men. In general, these concentrated views of manhood suggest the many ways in which advertising negatively affects men by narrowing the definition of what it means to be a man in American society.

Each ad or commercial provides its own answer to the question: "What are men really like?"

Upon re-viewing them I realized anew how much the role of the strong, silent, authoritarian, militaristic and threatening male pervades societal ideals. Although it's neither realistic nor a positive role to emulate, it also shapes men's views of themselves and how they measure up to masculine role models.

Typically, my students at California State University/San Bernardino have a difficult time learning to step back and analyze these images. Although they may be familiar with the issues presented by women's liberation, the concept of men reacting against male social roles is a radical new idea. Innovative programs like this video and slide show can certainly help.

Fortunately, although the creators of *Stale Roles* do give scope to the stereotypes, they didn't stop there. A few advertisers have begun to concentrate on another view of masculinity by portraying images of men who are gentle, caring, sensitive — even able to hold babies. Such images offer alternative social roles for men unwilling or unable to restrict themselves to the role of the strong, silent loner on horseback. Instead, they affirm the idea that men, like women, experience a broad range of feelings and emotions.

Stale Roles' primary value, then, is as a tool that uses the media itself to strip away the mask that society has insisted men wear. The recognition that men need not deny their feelings and pretend to be something other than what they really are is the first step toward more complete images of men. Only when we understand ourselves can we demand that this understanding be reflected in the media.

Tom Nakayama is an assistant professor in the department of communication, CSU/San Bernardino.
This show is available for rental ($100) or purchase ($540) from: OASIS, 15 Willoughby Street, Brighton, MA 02135, (617) 782-7769.

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REFLECTION/ACTION

Tools to build media awareness for groups, classes, families

WOMEN

Men Still Creators of Male Stereotypes

By Sally Steenland

Most groups who rail against television's stereotyped portrayals of themselves — women, minorities, children, the elderly, the disabled — are outsiders to the television industry. That is to say, very few are employed in decision-making positions at the studios and networks. Some groups, like women, have made inroads; while others, such as the handicapped, are still almost totally outside the system.

This issue of *Media&Values* contains articles critiquing the image of males on television. Many raise serious concerns about male portrayals: too aggressive, success-driven, materialistic, etc. The irony is that these images are created mostly by men themselves, since they still dominate the industry.

For this reason, the usual complaints of a group's exclusion from the creative process — and suggested remedies for more group participation — don't seem to work. When outsiders complain, we say to the white male-dominated industry, "You are creating (female, minority) characters about whom you know very little. You should hire more (women, minorities) whose sensibilities and experiences lie closer to the character than yours."

But when white males are turning out narrow, one-dimensional male characters, what's the solution?

Perhaps the usual call for more diverse creative input is still the answer. Maybe men on TV would be more varied, interesting and authentic if they were seen through the eyes of others. Maybe TV husbands, fathers and workers reflected through minority or female eyes would look quite different from what we now see. We might see foolishness exposed and heroism in unexpected places. We might see minority males in leading roles, instead of the perennial sidekick.

Male characters on TV have always been more numerous and diverse than females. Their age span is broader and their job categories less restricted. Moreover, in general they are active characters who move the plot rather than passive characters who are acted upon. Even when involved in relationships, they are independent. These are positive qualities.

The men working in the industry need to recognize that these are human qualities and expand them to include females. They should also share creative control so that women and minorities have a crack at interpreting male images. With a little luck, a broader, more human view of both men and women could be the result.

Sally Steenland is media director of the National Commission on Working Women of Wider Opportunities for Women.

PASTORING

What Gender Is God?

By Stephen Commins

Recently, my local newspaper ran a review of a comedian's live show that focused on his male bravado and his rather brutal putdown of women. The reviewer noted that the audience, mostly young and male, enjoyed the jokes about sex-without-commitment and the attitude that women were there to be used.

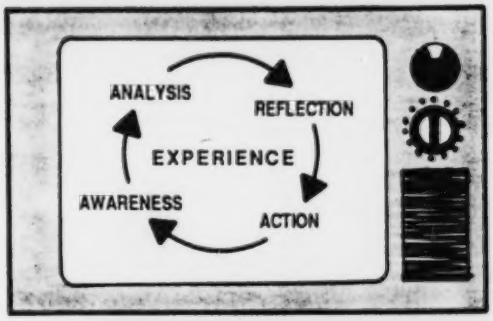
I recalled this review while reading Mark Miller's essay on TV fathers in this issue. There was a thread of painful familiarity in his account of the continuing dominance of male power even if the external trappings had changed. While recognition of male power is important in analyzing media images, it is also essential to explore how and why these images are created and reinforced in our consciousness.

Male domination and female subordination are images tightly woven into Western cultures, both religious (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) and secular (Greek, Roman and Enlightenment). The re-thinking of male and female must begin with these roots, with our religious and philosophical traditions that underlie "how the world works."

For even as women have gained greater power in many religious organizations, the fundamental image of God/the divine as male has not changed. Despite the acceptance of ordination for women (in some traditions), this change should not be mistaken for the real revolution that still must take place at a deeper level: the fundamental acceptance of females as equal to males in the very nature of humankind — a nature established and blessed by God/the divine.

Exploring male dominance challenges religious educators and leaders to ask tough questions. These questions become difficult and upsetting as they go to the very nature of divinity and how it is reflected in social and political relations. We may start out asking questions about male images in the media or in society at large but in the religious community we have some deeper work to do:

- What does it mean to call God "father?" Why is it unsettling to call God "mother?"
- What is the implicit message in praying for "mankind?"
- What is the continued impact of hymns or prayers that focus on male images of leadership and divinity?
- How does the image of God as male reinforce and perpetuate the dominance of males and the subordination of females in everyday personal relationships and the very structures of society?



The issue of values in today's media is not having all the answers but asking the right questions.

— *Media&Values* Editorial Philosophy

Encouraging a congregation or study group to grapple with these issues is urgent if we are serious about eradicating sexism in our society today. A valuable exercise is to ask people the impact of calling God "white father" and praying for blessings upon "white men."

These expressions may sound absurd, but they also help us understand in a more jarring fashion how the words, prayers and images we use in religious settings create a world where if God is male, then no wonder the male is god.

Stephen Commins, an ordained Episcopal priest, is president of Immaculate Heart College Center, Los Angeles.

YOUTH

Media Models Say Muscles Make Men

By Myra Junyk

Muscles are in. Young men believe that to be a "real man" you have to project a strong, tough body image. Young women agree. After all, the athletic male body rippling with muscles is spread over nearly every magazine, billboard and sports page you look at.

But in Canada, young men have become painfully aware of the price of this kind of manliness because of the tragedy of Ben Johnson.

Long before the runner won the gold medal for Canada at the 1988 Summer Olympics, he had been the hero of young people in Canada. Here was the perfect male stereotype — strong, silent, muscle-bound, athletic and rich! It was not surprising, then, that young people in Canada reacted with utter disbelief and disappointment when they found out that their idol was lying to them by taking steroids.

Unfortunately, many young men were not all that shocked. They had also been taking steroids — so that they could look like their well-developed idols. The Dubin Inquiry into the use of drugs in sports is currently revealing the horrifying extent of steroid use in competitive athletics. Young men say they use steroids in order to "look like real men."

But media-created images of muscle-bound men are not limited to sports reporting. Just look at other media heroes: Rambo, Hulk Hogan and Chuck Norris. All of them share the media image of muscles, muscles and more muscles. The message to young people is clear: To be popular and successful, you have to have a great body!

Ads also portray an abundance of scantily clad, muscle-bound, athletic-looking young men. Is there any male cologne ad without a half-naked male body in it? Advertising, however, can provide an entry point to working with young people to de-mythologize media's messages about physical attractiveness and body image.

Bring a collection of print ads to your class or group that portray males or females in outlandish positions. Look especially at high-fashion magazines. Have the members of the group "try out" some of the poses and hold them for a few minutes. While poses are held, other participants can analyze what messages are being communicated: power? authority? seductiveness? What does the position say to the audience about human relationships? About the product being advertised? How do the models feel during and after the poses?

Debrief the exercise with a discussion of body image and real human identity. With this kind of guidance, young people can learn to look beyond the images to the stereotypes and assumptions our culture makes about gender.

Myra Junyk heads the English department at Notre Dame High School in Toronto.

INTERNATIONAL

Men Still Lionized on Nigerian TV

By Emmanuel Akudinobi

The characters on Nigerian television — like those in most Third World countries — either reflect the values of the society or rebel against them. In Nigeria, as in most of Africa, the society they mirror is patrilineal and patriarchal. The importance of males in society is reflected in the central roles they play in the plots of Nigerian television programs.

While the personalities represented by these characters run the gamut of character types — from the hero to the wimp, from the dolt to the leader, from the good guy to the tough — there is always an underlying tendency to justify the status quo of male dominance. TV's men are often lionized, especially in their roles as breadwinners and heads of households.

This tendency is easy to spot in *The Masquerade*, one of the most popular Nigerian television programs. A satirical piece that uses comedy to explore the shortcomings of government and the ills of the society, it focuses on a patriarch named Zebrudaya. By assuming the role of the masquerade — a role related to Nigerian beliefs about ancestor worship and the spirit world — Zebrudaya assumes a power position. He becomes a guardian of public morality, epitomizing the collective conscience of all concerned fathers. Within the household his word is law. He dispenses rewards and punishment as he deems fit. Not even his wife, Ovulalia, is free from his wrath.

Two other popular sitcoms, *Bassey and Company* and *Samanja*, both address the people's aspirations and yearning for advancement. Bassey, a schemer trying to make his fortune, epitomizes the get-

"I don't want to go through life pretending to be James Dean or Marlon Brando."

John Lennon

rich-quick tendencies of younger Nigerian men. Because his scams are almost always foiled, he also represents their lack of success. Samanja, on the other hand, caricatures the chaos in the military that results from soldiers who dream of rising through the ranks but lack the literacy and other skills necessary for success.

As these models indicate, Nigeria is lacking in American-style shows about young professionals pursuing their careers against romantic backgrounds. Since most shows cast females as gossips or traditional housewives, male-female interaction as portrayed also reinforces the patriarchal status quo.

As the society moves from a traditional, agricultural economic base to a greater degree of urbanism, men — and women — will change with it. As male roles begin to vary more in reality, their transformation will also appear on television.

Emmanuel Akudinobi is a graduate of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

White Male Experts Dominate News

By Donna Demac

If you want to see a clear example of the media's definition and reinforcement of power in U.S. society, just turn to the evening news and public-affairs programs.

Despite minor stylistic differences, what stands out about network anchormen Jennings, Brokaw and Rather is their similar facial expressions, most noticeably the locked jaw that opens on command, followed by the closed jaw and glance downward to indicate a subject is closed.

Although other public-affairs programs feature guests instead of anchormen, they repeat this pattern. Invited experts are overwhelmingly white men, in established positions, who rarely deal with even the most impassioned public controversy in any other mode than that of the talking head. The message conveyed is one of politics as an elite society of locked jaws.

Even the highly respected public affairs show *Nightline* conforms to this approach to public affairs, according to a now-famous study, *Are You on the Nightline Guest List?* released in 1988 by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (F.A.I.R.).

In an exhaustive research job, the study reviewed *Nightline* transcripts for more than three years. It showed that of all guests, Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, Elliott Abrams and Jerry Falwell appeared most often. Public-interest advocates, labor and racial and ethnic leaders comprised only six percent of the total guest list. FAIR points out that, night after night, *Nightline* virtually ignores "popular social movements, minority communities and others who might challenge the status quo."

Needless to say, although *Nightline* was singled out for a comprehensive study, the problem is rampant in almost all television news. Exclusion of other groups from this closed fraternity of white, male experts results in a serious problem for a nation as diverse and problem-ridden as the United States. We desperately need to seek out and implement the expertise and ideas of women, minorities and people from all walks of life, including the poor. We also need to re-examine our centuries-old assumptions about the power structure as a white male club. Only then can we begin to give power — and do justice — to someone other than the same old talking heads.

Attorney Donna Demac teaches communications and law at New York University.

• For other insights into how *Nightline* frames the world, order ***Are You On the Nightline Guest List?*** from F.A.I.R., 130 West 25th Street, 8th floor, New York, NY 10001, (212)663-6700, $7.

Re:Action

Helping Children Challenge Stereotypes

Stereotypes and overgeneralizations characterize the way young children think. In line with that tendency, children learn expected sex roles early — and apply them liberally. They learn sex roles from many sources, but the media are prime teachers.

In order to challenge narrow sex-role images of men, watch TV with kids. Look at magazines together. Identify blatantly stereotypical representations of men. Make a "play" out of those messages, but change something. Make the man in the vignette a woman, or vice versa. The result will probably be humorous to the child, but the humor may open the door to discussion and insight. Why does it seem funny? Why can't a woman say or do those things? Even preschoolers can play this game.

Have older elementary-age children think about their favorite TV show. What if one or two main characters switched gender? Would it be possible considering the way the show is written? In what ways would it seem silly? In what ways would it be fine? What does the switch say about our images of men and of women as well?

– Judith Myers-Walls is associate professor of child development at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana.

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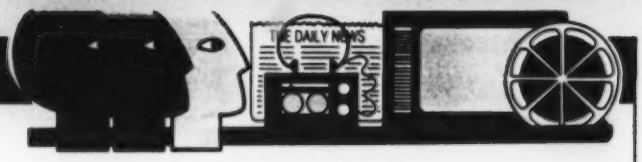
REFLECTION RESOURCE



The Lies That Bind: How Do Media Images of Men Affect Our Lives?

By Sam Femiano and Mark Nickerson

Turn on your television set and there is about a 90 percent chance that the first person you view will be male. Yet, although men predominate on TV, questions come up frequently about the types of men portrayed. How do they relate to the men we know in our daily lives?

Very often it seems clear that they differ a lot. Primarily, they are less real, more perfect and more predictable. In other words, they are stereotyped.

A stereotype is a view or a characterization of a person or a group of persons based upon narrow and frequently incorrect assumptions. Stereotypes are used by those who cannot or will not take the time to notice what a person is really like. They are particularly common in media because they are easier to create. Audiences and media production personnel both respond to them.

Stereotypes of men narrow our notions of what men can be and do.

Virtually all groups of people suffer from stereotyping and men are no exception. Stereotypes are powerful because they affect our expectations of what men should and should not be like. They are damaging because they narrow our notions of what men can be and do. They affect women's expectations of men in relationships and men's expectations of other men in work settings or in friendships. Media stereotypes have extra impact because they create images based on these assumptions, helping to shape men's own views about how they should act and how successful they are as men.

Sexual stereotyping begins early in men's lives. Boys learn what it means to be a man from family and peers. These ideas about approved behaviors and modes of thought are focused and supported by media messages.

Bravery, adventurousness, being able to think rationally, being strong and effective, for example, are all "manly" traits that are usually encouraged. So also are the ability to think independently and take the initiative. Media images supporting these behaviors include the strong, silent Marlboro man and military ads telling young men to "be all you can be." (Young women, on the other hand, are urged to pursue beauty and sex appeal.)

At the same time, males are discouraged from pursuing many positive traits that are perceived as unmanly. These include the ability to feel a range of emotions, including fear, hurt, confusion or despair. Even talking about these feelings is considered unmanly. Men are also not encouraged to learn to work cooperatively without the need for control, to love in a nonsexual way, to have friendships or to solve conflicts without violence.

These narrow masculine standards can lead to discrimination against those who deviate from them. But they can also prevent men themselves from living up to their full potential as human beings.

TV perpetuates male stereotyping in two ways. Men in key "positive" character roles are portrayed chiefly with in a restricted range of male traits. "Less manly" characteristics are usually displayed by supporting characters, as flaws in the personality of the central character or as a source of humor or difficulty.

In watching television, we need to tune into how TV treats male characters, how we relate to the characters, and how these characterizations influence our ideas about masculinity and the real men of all ages who star in our own lives.

Do we watch men on TV and feel unlike them and intimidated, or do we relate to them as real people, feel inspired and learn from them? The aware watcher can distinguish, and learn from, these reactions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use the following questions as a guide to your discussion about the ways men are portrayed on TV and how those images influence your perceptions and expectations of the men in your own life.

1. How many of your favorite shows feature men as the principal character, the center of the plot or the action? What messages do they suggest about the importance of men in our society relative to women and children?
2. List some of the roles men play on TV? How do they compare to their roles in the "real" world? How do they influence your expectations of how men actually behave?
3. Select several male characters from TV programming and match them to the characteristics listed below. You may match one character to more than one characteristic.

Stereotypic characteristics	*Non-traditional characteristics*
• logical thinkers	• sensitive to feelings
• think rather than feel	• work with others
• take charge of situations	• accept help
• loners	• emotionally expressive
• protect women and children	• caring for children
• aggressive	• having harmonious relationships
• adventurers, take risks	• engaging in home-related activities
• worldly wise	• having non-sexual friendships with women

4. How are the characteristics displayed by men on TV comparable to those of the men in your own life? How do they differ?
5. How does the portrayal of men differ in various types of programing? Do TV ads seem to portray the "new" man and sportscasting the more traditional man?
6. List your own male TV heroes. What qualities attract you to them? Do any actual men you know share them?
7. List the various ways men are shown on TV in relationship to other men, such as controlling/sharing, caring/abusive, fighting/friendly, etc.
8. In thinking about these TV men, how do they make you (if you are a man) feel about other men? Do you feel inferior to them or do you feel validated by them? In other words, how well do men on TV function as role models, as viewing spectacles, or as people to relate to?

Sam Femiano is a psychologist in private psychotherapy practice in Northhampton, MA. He is a co-chair of the Men's Studies Association.

Mark Nickerson is a social worker in private psychotherapy practice in Belchertown, MA. He conducts groups for men and is active in the Men's Resource Connection, a referral service in Western Massachusetts.

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Media&Values is a project of the Center for Media and Values, a non-profit educational organization to promote thoughtful awareness and better use of television and mass media. Membership is $30/year and includes *Media&Values* magazine. Additional contributions are tax-deductible.

Media&Values, 1962 South Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034 • (213) 559-2944

WATCH, READ, LISTEN

Resources for Follow-up

SIGHT/SOUND

• ***"Stale Roles and Tight Buns: Images of Men in Advertising"*** produced by men Organized Against Sexism and Institutionalized Stereotypes (OASIS). See review on page 16. OASIS, 15 Willoughby Street, Boston, MA 02135, (617)782-7769, $540, rental $100.

• **"Finally Letting It Go,"(1982) "At the Edge,"(1984) and "Talk It Over"(1987)** by Geof Morgan, a prominent musician in "Changing Men's Music," available in alternative record stores or from the record label. Flying Fish Records, 1304 West Schubert, Chicago, IL 60614, (312)528-5455.

IN PRINT

• ***Men's Lives,*** an anthology edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, collects the best social science and popular writings on men and masculinity (1989). Macmillan Publishing Company, College Division, Front & Brown Streets, Riverside, NJ 08075, (800)548-9939, $22.

• ***"Changing Men,"*** a magazine covering issues in gender, sex and politics, is published in June and November by Feminist Men's Publications, Inc., 306 N. Brooks Street, Madison, WI 53715. $16 for four issues.

• ***"Men's Studies Review,"*** is published quarterly by the Men's Studies Association, a task group of the National Organization for Changing Men (NOCM). Each issue contains materials of interest to men's studies scholars including theoretical and research articles, book reviews, bibliographic resources and professional events. P.O. Box 32, Harriman, TN 37748. Subscriptions $12.50; sample copy $3.50.

• In the insightful, classic ***Gender Advertisements,*** Erving Goffman's pictures and prose demonstrate the positive and negative ways in which men and women are portrayed in advertisements, 1988 (revised). Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, PA 18512, (800)242-7737, $10.95.

• ***"Gendered Television: Masculinity,"*** chapter 11 in *Television Culture* by John Fiske, details the complex cultural processes underlying television's role as an agent of popular culture (1987). Methuen, Inc., (Routledge) 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001, (212)244-3336, $13.95.

• ***"Machismo and Hollywood's Working Class"*** by Peter Biskind and Barbara Ehrenreich is included in *American Media and Mass Culture*, edited by Donald Lazere. This chapter details the themes of masculinity in film from domesticity to machismo, as it relates to ethnicity (1987). University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720, (800)822-6657, $15.95.

• ***"The Presentation of Gender in Advertising"*** chapter 46 in *Media USA: Process and Effect*, explores differences in the ways men and women are portrayed in advertising, including a content analysis (1988). Addison-Wesley/Longman Inc., Route 128, Reading, MA 01867, (800)447-2226, $21.50.

• ***Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity,*** edited by Michael S. Kimmel, combines the latest research on men and masculinity within traditional academic disciplines and in the field of men's studies. Sage Publications, Inc. (1987), Box 5084, Newbury Park, CA 91359, (805)499-0721, $16.95.

• ***"Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home,"*** chapter three in *Boxed In: Women and Television*, edited by Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer. British researcher Ann Gray uncovers the gender biases toward domestic technology in the home (1988). Unwin Hyman (Pandora Press), 8 Winchester Pl., Winchester, MA 01890, (617)729-0830, $11.95.

• ***Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*** by David Morley, examines the different ways in which television is actually watched within the family, the politics of the living room and the structure of familial power relations (1986). Comedia Publishing Group, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG, $9.50.

• ***World Families Watch Television,*** edited by James Lull, includes major new research on media technology in homes around the world (1988). Sage Publications, Inc., Box 5084, Newbury Park, CA 91359, (805)499-0721, $16.50.

• ***The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*** by James B. Nelson unmasks traditional male roles and values and explores new connections for a more authentic wholeness. A superb resource (1988). Westminster Press, P.O. Box 718, William Penn Annex, Philadelphia, PA 19105, (800)523-1631, $8.95.

ORGANIZATIONS

• **OASIS Incorporated,** a non-profit collective of men Organized Against Sexism and Institutionalized Stereotypes, offers lectures/seminars/workshops/training on male socialization and sex-role stereotyping with a feminist philosophy. OASIS, 15 Willoughby Street, Boston, MA 02135, (617)782-7769.

• **NOCM,** the National Organization for Changing Men, is composed of 11 Task Groups (Ending Men's Violence, Fathering, Gay Rights, Homophobia, etc.) organized so that men and women across the country can talk to each other, plan activities and support each other. NOCM membership includes "Brother" the newsletter. Write: Michael Shiffman, 1402 Greenfield Avenue #1, Los Angeles, CA 90025, (213)479-8774, membership dues $25 annually, $15 for students, the unemployed and retired persons.

• **Men's Rights Association,** a 15-year-old organization in the U.S. and Canada that is affiliated with Men International. It provides education, divorce information and support and a monthly newsletter. Membership: $20, write: Men's Rights Association, Rt. 6, Forest Lake, MN 55025, (612)464-7887.

• **MR, Inc.,** a non-profit corporation that raises public awareness about sexism and men's problems offering presentations and workshops with an anti-sexist philosophy. Men's Rights, Inc., P.O. Box 163180, Sacramento, CA 95816, (916)484-7333.

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SPRINGBOARD TO ACTION

Putting this issue to work

By Elizabeth Thoman, Editor

Women in the media is a frequently discussed topic but a look at male roles in the media is a unique contribution to the conversation. In this first of our two-part series on gender issues in the media, we've identified a number of provocative topics that merit personal reflection and further exploration by individuals or groups.

Next Steps

1. Every woman who read the early drafts of "Home, Home on the Remote" (pp. 3 - 7), could immediately name a spouse, a father, a brother, a friend who's "just like that" — "obsessed" by the TV remote control. Many were, as one woman counselor said, "floored" by the concept of technology as a power symbol for men and women as well as families. An excellent activity for family counseling or discussion groups would be to replicate the research project noted in the article: draw up a list of home technology — from vacuum cleaners to stereos — and have the participants "color code" each one pink (feminine) or blue (masculine). The resulting discussion is guaranteed to be lively and insightful.

2. When I was a child, one of my favorite TV shows was *My Little Margie*. I loved Gale Storm's independent character but my dad objected strongly to her bumbling buffoon of a father. Though we often disagreed about the appropriateness of my viewing the show, what was ultimately more influential was my father's willingness to discuss with me his opinions and values. Use the article on pp. 6-7 to clarify your views of fatherhood on television — and share them with your children.

3. Youth leaders and high school teachers — don't overlook the important information on steroid use by young men covered by our new "Youth" columnist, Myra Junyk, p. 19. Her exercise on body image is a great group idea for classes and retreats.

4. And Steve Commins' "Pastoring" column (p. 18) on the maleness of God is not just for leaders in the religious community. His comments strike at the very core of the patriarchal imagery that has carried over to our contemporary media society.

5. Men's organizations looking for resource speakers on any of the topics in *Men, Myth and Media* can call us for contact information for any of our authors. Frederic Howard (p. 16), musician Geof Morgan (p. 11), Michael Kimmel (p. 9) and others are all excellent and provocative presenters.

If We'd Only Had Room

• What myths and images are promoted in video games? Gender specialists note that many video games attract boys because they are highly competitive, the game images are primarily male and they often center on themes of war, violence or domination. Parents, teachers and youth leaders need to be alert to the values messages of video games. Form a parent/teacher committee to review the appropriateness of popular games for age and maturity. Search out games that are suitable for girls or for both sexes. Share the results of your work with other parents, especially at holiday gift-giving times.

• What images of males do we get in comic strips and cartoons? Compare "Dagwood" or "Maggie and Jiggs" with "Family Circle" or "The Middletons." Cartoons help us laugh at ourselves. What gender issues do we laugh at in "Kathy," "Calvin and Hobbes" or "Sally Forth?"

Emerging Issues

• Despite the stereotypes of the past, we're now bringing up generations of kids who have much more equal access to media technology. Or do they? Do the girls in your family or classroom have as much access to the computer as the boys? Do both sexes learn to program the VCR? Does Mom use the computer, or just Dad? Explore how your schools or youth clubs promote technical competence for both girls and boys.

• Donna Demac's column (p. 20) pointed out the dominance of white male "experts" on network news shows. But what about local news and talk shows? A project for a group or class would be to monitor local news shows to see how many guests are women. How many are men? How many are minorities? But don't stop there. Talk to your station managers, news directors or talk show producers to help identify the competent women and minorities who could be called upon as experts on local issues. Most producers would welcome such a resource list and would probably use it gratefully.

Next Issue

We'll continue our coverage of gender issues in the media with *Redesigning Women*. These two issues together will be developed into a pilot workshop for local groups to explore the roles of women and men in television and mass media.

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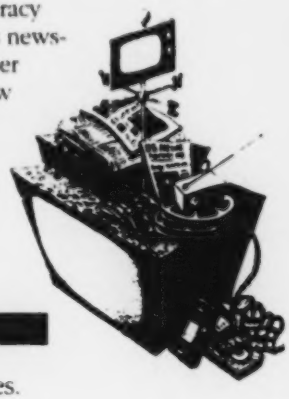

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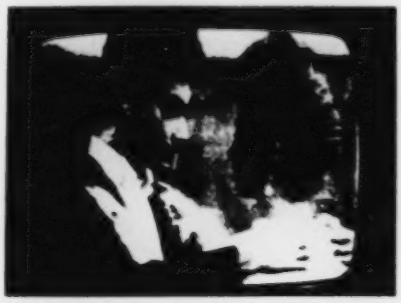

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Women in the media is a frequently discussed topic, but a look at male roles in the media is a unique contribution to the conversation. From the Marlboro Man to Calvin Klein, from **thirty**something *to* Three Men and a Baby, *the roles, and the rules, are all under review.*

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— Michael Kimmel,
contributing editor, Psychology Today